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EXPLANATION of a VIEW of FLORENCE, exhibiting at the PANORAMA LEICESTER SQUARE.

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DESCRIPTION

OF

A VIEW OF THE CITY

OF

FLORENCE,

AND THE

SURROUNDING COUNTRY,

NOW EXHIBITING AT THE

PANORAMA, LEICESTER SQUARE.

PAINTED BY THE PROPRIETOR,

ROBERT BURFORD,

FROM DRAWINGS TAKEN BY HIMSELF IN 1830.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

1832.

NOW EXHIBITING,

IN THE LOWER CIRCLE,

A VIEW

OF

MILAN.

FLORENCE.

" But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
" Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
" A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
" Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
" Her corn, and wine, and oil, and plenty leaps
" To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
" Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps,
" Was modern luxury of commerce born,
" And buried learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn."—Byron.

The far-famed and beautiful City of Florence, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, is considered, and justly so, one of the finest cities in Europe, or perhaps in the world, and is generally and deservedly called " La bella Firenza, fairest of earthly cities ;" it stands in a luxuriant and extensive valley, surrounded on three sides by numerous graceful hills, cultivated to their summits, and picturesque mountains of varied forms, rising insensibly, until they combine with wild and majestic Apennines, which form a bold and precipitous barrier between the Val d'Arno and the plains of Lombardy; on the fourth side, is the fertile and flourishing valley, extending upwards of forty miles towards Pisa, so thickly studded with villages, palaces, and the peaceful dwellings of the peasants, that it seems one continued suburb as far as the eye can reach ; through the centre of the valley the Arno glides towards the Mediterranean, adding, by its graceful windings, to the striking beauty of the scene, and diffusing fertility and verdure to its banks, which display a richness of cultivation, and a picture of busy and happy life, unrivalled in any country. The present Panorama, taken from an elevated spot, in the most favourable part of the city (the Convent of the Jesuits, near the foot of the Bridge of Santa Trinita), displays most of the principal religious edifices, churches, and palaces, fine antique buildings, rising in dark and imposing majesty in the fore-ground, and finely contrasting with the surrounding amphitheatre of hills, luxuriant with the olive and the vine, and so covered with white and shining palaces, convents, and dwellings, that, to use the words of Ariosto, the very soil appears to produce them ; the fertile valley, the hills by which it is bordered, retiring in softened purple, until they melt away in the brighter tints of the horizon ; and the broken line of the summits of the distant Apennines, rising bare and rugged in every variety of picturesque form, amongst the dark foliage of the oak,

the chesnut, and the cyprus; the whole under a bright and clear atmosphere, totally free from smoke, present a rich combination of beauty, fascinating and pleasing to behold; and it may be truly said, that—

" Of all the fairest cities of the earth,
" None are so fair as Florence. 'Tis a gem
" Of purest ray—a treasure for a casket!"—SOUTHEY.

Florence is supposed to have been founded by the soldiers of Sylla, about sixty years before Christ, or by the inhabitants of Fiesole; it was enlarged and embellished by the Triumvirs, repeatedly assailed during the invasions of the Goths, destroyed by Totila, King of the Ostrogoths, in 553, and rebuilt upwards of two centuries after by Charlemagne; in its early days, it was neither distinguished by remarkable events nor ennobled by great personages; but, under the Greek Emperors, became one of the principal cities of Etruria. When their dominion ceased in Italy, it was one of the first places that adopted the republican form of government; at first aristocratic, but the dissensions of the nobles increasing the power of the people, at last democratic. In the year 1215, a murder, committed in the city, gave rise to the famous factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the *Neri* and *Bianchi*, as they were also called, from the families who headed them. The feuds and contentions of these rival powers present such a series of popular tumults and broils, that Florence may be said to have been in a state of continual civil war for a long series of years, yet, during the middle ages, it was frequently compared with Athens; the arts and sciences were encouraged, and learned men fostered and protected with unbounded liberality; its commerce, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, was so extensive, that it rivalled that of England, France, and Holland, and its districts, according to Machiavelli, could, in a few hours, at the sound of a bell, bring together 135,000 well-armed men. Under the ascendancy of the merchant princes, in the fifteenth century, particularly Cosmo, the father of his country, and Lorenzo, the magnificent, it attained the greatest height of its commercial importance, and its luxury and elegance were proverbial; but when governed by their successors, under the title of Grand Duke, conferred by the Emperor of Germany, and supported by his troops, commerce declined, and it was soon lost amongst the crowd of Italian cities. The French invasion of 1799, compelled the Grand Duke to fly, and a provisional government of French Generals was formed, until the treaty of Luneville, when Florence was ceded to the Infante of Spain, the Prince of Parma, who took the title of King of Etruria. In 1807, by a second treaty with Spain, Florence was annexed to France, and Buonaparte's sister, Eliza Baziocchi, assumed the reins of government, as his vicegerent. The peace of 1814 restored the Grand Duke Ferdinand III., whose son, Leopold II., now reigns.

The circumference of the city is about six miles, it is surrounded by a wall and ditch, defended by two citadels, and has seven principal gates; the Arno divides it into unequal parts, connected by four handsome bridges, and contributes much to its beauty and salubrity; the quays on each side are the most pleasant, and most frequented parts, but there is not a spot in the whole city that is not worthy notice. Specimens of architecture, sculpture, and painting, by the best masters, unmutilated by

violence, and scarcely affected by time, form an inexhaustible fund for wonder and admiration, and exhibit lasting vestiges of its former power and magnificence; several of the squares are spacious, but the streets, with very few exceptions, are too narrow to exhibit to advantage the noble buildings by which they are filled; they are all well paved with flat stones, two or three feet square, in the manner of ancient Rome and Pompeii, the work of Lapo de Colle and his son, in 1250. The churches are numerous and grand, and contain, with scarcely an exception, productions of the most celebrated masters, in painting and sculpture. The public buildings and palaces of the nobles are generally simple in their architecture, but regular and extensive; fine old buildings, resembling fortresses, the perpetual struggles of various families for pre-eminence, and their continual exposure to attacks from rival factions, rendering it necessary that the decorations of their houses should accord with their personal security; their massive strength and severe Tuscan style, eloquently tell the history of the times in which they were erected. The more modern, although they partake in a slight degree of this general character, present fine specimens of Italian taste, and leave a most pleasing impression; the lower chambers are usually vaulted, and often serve as wine stores, from which the produce of the estates of the noble owner is retailed in small quantities; a broad line of stone generally runs the whole length of the front, forming a seat, where, in former times, the dependants of the family sought repose and shelter under the massive cornice of the roof; huge iron rings still remain, where the banners of the house were displayed by day, and torches placed at night; the upper apartments are large and lofty, seldom with fire-places; the walls are painted in fresco, or hung with silk, and are covered with the best productions of the fine arts; many of the roofs are flat, forming terraces, ornamented with vases of flowers, &c.; the few chimneys display considerable taste, and are in every variety of fanciful and grotesque form. The houses of the middling classes and tradespeople are large old-fashioned buildings, and the shops not particularly attractive. The population of the city is estimated at the present time to be about 80,000, being considerably less than it formerly contained; activity and bustle constantly prevails in the streets, not only during the day, but for a great part of the night; towards evening, crowds of well-dressed persons seat themselves on the Trinity Bridge, or at the doors of the coffee houses, enjoying the pleasures of conversation, or playing games of chance, whilst the terraced roofs of the houses afford pleasant retreats for more private parties, concerts, &c. The dresses of all classes are neat and becoming—that of the higher the latest French fashion, excepting during the carnival, when the usual absurd and varied scene is exhibited as in most other Italian cities; the dress of the females from the country always forms an exception to this rule, their clothes being so covered with jewels, trinkets, and gold and silver lace, that they are frequently worth several hundred pounds.

EXPLANATION OF THE ENGRAVING.

1.—*Porta Romana.*

Called also Porta San Pietro Gattolini, from a church demolished by Cosmo I., when he strengthened the defences of the city; it is the direct road to Rome.

3.—*Santo Spirito.*

The ancient church of Santo Spirito having been destroyed by fire, during the celebration of a fête in 1471, the present magnificent structure was then erected, after a design by Brunellescho, and its magnitude and the symmetry of its proportions, both externally and internally, render it, in point of architecture and beauty, one of the finest in Florence; it is in the form of a latin cross, 304 feet in length by 102 in breadth, divided into a nave and two aisles, by noble Corinthian columns, each of a single stone; it contains thirty-eight chapels, decorated in the first style of art. The great altar, by Michaellozzi, is composed of fine marbles, lapis lazuli, and precious stones, exquisitely wrought, and is placed under a dome of white carrera marble, supported by four fine Corinthian columns. This church contains the finest organ in Florence, erected in 1824; the work of Colognoli, a monk of the adjoining convent, which is also a very fine building.

4.—*Casin Torrigiani.*

Recently erected by the Marquis of the same name; a well-finished, pleasant, and very ornamental building, in a large garden, laid out with considerable taste.

5.—*San Francisco.*

Erected in 1349, together with the adjoining convent, formerly occupied by Franciscans, by Cajus di Macci. In 1560 the church was rebuilt by the Macci family, and again in 1704, after a design by J. B. Foggini, by order of the Grand Duke Ferdinand, who, having been presented by the monks with a fine picture, by André del Sarto, recompensed them by rebuilding their church.

7.—*Il Carmine.*

This church, built in 1771, by J. Ruggeri and J. Mannajoni, stands on the site of one built in 1268, and destroyed by fire. It is a large building, without division, leading to a finely-painted dome and three recesses, forming together a latin cross. The simplicity of the design and the justness of the proportions produce a most pleasing effect; and, in the beauty of its internal decorations, it is not surpassed by any in the city, although part of the architectural ornament is only painted. It contains seventeen chapels, that called the Capella della SS. Vergine del Carmine, which miraculously escaped the fire, has painted on its walls, in fresco, the life of the Apostle Peter, commenced in 1415, by Masolina da Panicale, and continued after his death by Masaccio and Lippi, which is considered to have been the school of painting of the following age.

8.—*Monte Olivetto.*

A pleasant eminence, a short distance from the city, on the road to Pisa; on the summit is the Convent of St. Barthelemy, erected towards the close of the thirteenth century, by a society of bankers and merchants, who ceded it, in 1334, to the order of monks by whom it is at present occupied.

10.—*Porta San Frediano.*

This gate, surmounted by a high tower, was built after the design and under the inspection of Andre Pisano; by it Charles VIII. of France made his triumphant entry, on which occasion the Florentines locked up their wives in the monasteries and convents. After the heroic trait of Pierre Capponi, he hastened to quit a city, which, though in the possession of his army, could still maintain its rights.

11.—*Schneiderff's Hotel.*

A capacious and magnificent establishment, well provided with every comfort and luxury, at every season of the year, and at very moderate charges.

12.—*Casin Guicciardini.*

The residence of the great statesman and celebrated historian, Francesco Guicciardini, now in the possession of one of his family bearing the same name. He finished his celebrated History of Italy at his Villa d'Aratri, where he is supposed to have died, from the effects of slow poison.

13.—*Hotel Quattri Nazioni.*

A large well-conducted establishment, replete with every accommodation; much frequented by foreigners.

14.—*Cascine.*

The royal farm and dairy, a vast and pleasant promenade of wood and parterre, on the banks of the Arno; in the centre of its delicious grounds is a small palace, belonging to the Grand Duke, the wings of which form dairy rooms, and the houses for the milch cows; also a large and commodious building, kept by a restaurateur. The grounds are splendid and diversified, embracing every description of sylvan solitude or public promenade; there is also a spacious drive amongst the trees, frequented daily by the fashionables of Florence, from the splendid equipage of the Grand Duke to the modest calash of the humble tradesman.

15.—*Pistoia.*

A beautiful town, situated in a fertile plain, near the river Ombrone, and surrounded by the boldest and most romantic scenery; it has a large and venerable cathedral, containing a celebrated collection of sacred relics; there are also several churches, a college, and many good houses. The inhabitants, who are about 10,000, manufacture cloth, organs, and fire-arms. Pistoia, which is fourteen miles from Florence, was famous, in ancient times, for the defeat of Cataline, and more recently the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines have rendered it equally celebrated. The country around is the richest and best cultivated in Tuscany.

16.—*Prato.*

A small town on the low and fertile banks of the Bizensio, about nine miles from Florence; it has a fine marble cathedral, and several churches, and contains about 10,000 inhabitants, who manufacture copper utensils, woollen cloths, hats, &c.

17.—*Ponte alla Carraja.*

So called from its being more frequented by carriages than either of the other bridges. It was built in 1318, from the design of Arnolfo di Lapo, of wood; but having been several times nearly destroyed by the overflowings of the river, Cosmo I. caused it to be rebuilt in its present state, from the design of Ammanati, in 1557.

18.—*The Arno.*

This highly picturesque river, the most considerable in Tuscany, has its source in the Apennines, and traverses the duchy from east to west, emptying itself into that part of the Mediterranean called the Gulf of Genoa. In the summer season, like most southern streams, it frequently loses its waters, being, even in the neighbourhood of the city, little more than a succession of pools united by a narrow stream; in the winter, however, owing to the melted snow and rain from the mountains, it is increased to a broad, deep, and extremely rapid river, frequently rising nearly to the height of the quays, which, according to Sir G. Shuckburgh's measurement, are one hundred and ninety feet above the level of the sea. Just below the city, the current has formed very considerable banks of gravel and sand, which, if not removed, will, in a short time, impede the navigation: there are also two wears, the water being turned for the purpose of giving motion to the machinery of several mills, &c.; the boats from Pisa, &c. lie a little below the most distant, and, when the weather is fair and the water plentiful, make a pleasant and rapid passage.

19.—*Ognissanti.*

This monastery was originally founded by some unfortunate Milanese, who, having escaped from the ruin of their country, settled in Florence, and contributed much to the improvement of the various manufactories, particularly that of cloth, in Tuscany. In 1554, it came into the possession of the monks of the order of St. Francis, who still occupy it. The church was rebuilt in 1627, by Sebastian Pettiross; the façade is the work of Matthieu Nigetti and the roof is painted by Romei; several chapels, profusely decorated with fine paintings, &c. are contained within its walls; in one, a flat stone records, by the following inscription, the resting-place of the celebrated navigator who has given his name to one quarter of the globe:—

"Amerigo Vespuccio Posteris et Suis 1742."

20.—*Palazzo Ricasoli.*

At the extremity of Ognisanti Street is a splendid building, with two fine façades, after the design of Michellozo; it communicates, by a subterranean passage, with a fine garden on the banks of the river.

22.—*Palazzo Corsini.*

This magnificent palace, one of the most conspicuous buildings on the quay, will, when finished, be the largest private residence in Florence; the original erection was from a design of P. F. Silvani, but it has been very considerably enlarged, by additions, in the same Tuscan style; the magnificent staircase and noble apartments (the grand saloon being the finest in the city) are painted by the first artists, and contain many rare marbles, pictures, &c. The family of Corsini are noble and ancient; Pope Nicholas III., who died in 1281, and Pope Clement XII., who died in 1732, were members of it.

25.—*Palazzo della Contessa d'Albany.*

The much-frequented and elegant residence of the amiable and accomplished Louisa, Princess of Stolberg, Countess of Albany, the widow of James III., the last of the Stuarts, and "La mia Donne," of Alfieri, to whom she was much attached, and to whom she paid the most unremitting attentions at the time of his death, in 1803.

27.—*Ponte a Santa Trinità.*

Originally erected in 1252, but destroyed by the overflowing of the river in 1557, when the present beautiful structure was erected, by order of Cosmo I., from a design by Ammanati; it was finished in three years, and cost upwards of 40,000 silver florins. It is much admired for its lightness and elegance, and for the flat elliptic form of its three arches; the abutments of the piers, however, are necessarily massive, and project so far as to produce rather a disagreeable effect when it is viewed obliquely; the arms in the centre, and the statues at the corners, representing the four seasons, are finely carved in white marble. It was supposed, until within these few years, to be unequal to a great weight, and carriages were not allowed to pass over. In October 1608, the Pisans, who came to Florence to assist at the nuptials of Cosmo II., gave, after their custom, on this bridge, a representation of the famous "Giuoco del Ponte." The best coffee and subscription houses, and reading rooms, are in the Piazza Santa Trinita, at the foot of the bridge.

29.—*Santa Maria Novella.*

Erected in 1279, by Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro, Florentines; the façade was finished in 1470, by Leon Baptiste Alberti, at the expense of a Florentine, named Giovanni Rucellai. It is considered one of the finest churches in Italy, and was so much admired by Michael Angelo, that he used to call it his "Sposa." The architecture of the front is a mixture of Gothic and Grecian; the interior is pointed Gothic, but irregular and imperfect, the pillars which support the roof having capitals resembling the Corinthian order; the arches at the entrance of the church, being larger than the others, have a singular effect upon the perspective, and occasion the whole to appear much larger than it really is. The chapels are constructed uniform with the original design by Vasari, and are splendidly ornamented with works of art; amongst the monuments is one to Phillip Strozzi, and a celebrated wooden crucifix, by Brunellescho, called the crucifix of the eggs; this great artist challenged Donatello which should attain the greatest excellence in a work of this kind;—having finished his, he invited Donatello to dine with him, but pretending business, sent him to his house with some eggs, where he was so much struck with the work, that he let the eggs fall, and remained gazing on it until the arrival of Brunelleschо. The church also contains two curious astronomical instruments, made and erected in 1573, by Ignazio Dante, a learned monk, under the protection of Cosmo I. The monastery is celebrated for its *spezieria*, or dispensary, the monks being the best compounders of drugs and perfumes in Florence.

30.—*Santa Trinità.*

This church belongs to the monks of Vallombrosa; it was erected in 1250 by Nicholas Pisano. The façade, which is in good taste, is ornamented by a fine bas-relief, and a statue of St. Alexis, by Caccini; the convent is large and magnificent; it was erected by Bernard Buontalenti, and contains many fine works of art.

31.—*San Lorenzo.*

The ancient edifice, dedicated to St. Lawrence, erected at the expense of a lady, named Juliano, was consecrated by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in 393, and was for many years the cathedral. In 1423 it was nearly destroyed by fire, during the celebration of a festival in honour of an union between the Guelphs of Arezzo and those of Florence, and two years after it was rebuilt, in its present form, by Brunellescho, at the expense of the Republic. The façade, as is the case with many churches in Florence, remains unfinished, a circumstance accounted for by the fact, that, when the church is completed, the fund appropriated for its erection ceases. The church itself has but few claims to notice; the interior, which is four hundred feet in length, is divided in the usual manner, by Corinthian columns, and contains a cupola, finely painted by Meucci, an altar, presented by the Grand Duke Leopold, two bronze pulpits, by Donatello, and the tombs of Cosmo, the father of his country, and his two sons. Twenty-four chapels, profusely decorated with works of the most eminent artists, are attached to this church. The

new sacristy, the imposing exterior of which is seen from all parts of the city, was built by Michael Angelo, in 1520, by order of Leo. X., as a burying place for the Medici. It contains the tombs of Giuliano and Lorenzo, adorned by their statues, and Michael Angelo's two celebrated—

> Gigantic forms of Night and Day
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly;
> Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
> A two-fold influence, only to be felt.

The Capella di Medici is one of the most beautiful and expensive depositories of the dead ever erected; it was commenced in 1604 by Matthieu Nigetti, from a design by Vasari, and gave employment to three hundred men for many years; the form is octagonal, ninety-four feet in diameter, and the elevation above two hundred; it contains the monuments of six Grand Dukes of the Medici family, in the most rare and costly marble, and by the most esteemed artists; and pillars of oriental and Egyptian granite, jaspar, and agate, with rich ducal crowns and coats of arms, in various precious stones, ornament the walls on all sides. The Grand Duke Ferdinand conceived the idea of adding to the sanctity of this chapel by transferring to it the holy sepulchre from Jerusalem; some progress was made towards obtaining it, when the plan was discovered by the Turks, and broken off. This chapel has cost, since its commencement to the time it was discontinued in 1722, above £.600,000. The cloisters of the church lead to the celebrated library Medicco Laurentienne, erected after a design by Michael Angelo. This library, founded by Clement VII., to contain the manuscripts collected by the family, is extremely rich, rare, and numerous, being above six thousand; in the centre is preserved, under a glass, a finger of the celebrated Galileo.

32.—*Palazzo Stiozzi.*

Originally built in the fifteenth century, by J. B. Rucellai, one of the best writers and the greatest patron of literature at that time, from a design of Leon Baptiste Alberti; it is now in the possession of the Medici family, and contains many fine works of art. In this palace, during a fête given to Leo X., Rucellai's *Rosamond*, the first tragedy ever acted in Italy, was played.

33.—*Fiesole, or Fasulæ.*

One of the twelve ancient cities of Etruria, supposed to have been destroyed about the time of the foundation of Florence, for which it furnished building materials. On a spot called Rocca dei Fiesolani, seven hundred feet above the level of Florence, is a monastery of Franciscan friars, from whence is a view of the richest and most beautiful description. The hill itself, with its double summit, town, gardens, vineyards, and olive groves, is the finest mass of scenery in the neighbourhood. The modern town, below, contains a fine cathedral, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Romulus, founded in 1028; the palace of the Bishop, the episcopal seminary, and several chapels. The wine and oil of the neighbourhood are esteemed particularly fine.

34.—*San Giovanni; or, the Baptistery.*

Erected on the site of a Temple of Mars, in the seventh century, from the ruins of several Roman buildings in the neighbourhood; the exterior, which is of an octagonal form, was encrusted with marble in 1293. It has three bronze gates, so beautifully executed that Michael Angelo said they were fit to form the entrances to paradise; one, by Andrew Pisano, in 1330, represents the life of John the Baptist; the other two were executed a century later, when the citizens, wishing to commemorate the cessation of the plague of 1400 by some great work of art, opened lists for the competition of all Italy, to produce designs for two other gates, to surpass, if possible, that of Pisano. The choice fell upon Lorenzo Ghiberti, who employed thirty years of his life in producing one, which is without exception the finest work of its kind in existence. The subjects are various portions of the Old and New Testaments. The interior of the temple, which is surrounded by noble granite pillars, is rich in works of art of every description, par-

ticularly some fine Mosaic work in the cupola, erected in 1260. The back of the great altar is of massive silver, weighing 325 Tuscan pounds, enriched with enamel and precious stones, the works of various artists for upwards of one hundred years; it represents, in twelve compartments, the life of St. John. To the south of the church stand two fine columns of porphyry, presented by the Pisans for the protection afforded them in 1117; large iron chains attached to them formerly closed the Port of Pisa, and remain here as trophies of their being at a later period defeated and plundered by their former friends. To the north of the church is the column of San Zenobio, erected to perpetuate the memory of a miracle performed by that saint, whose coffin, on its removal to the cathedral some years back, having by accident touched a dead elm tree on the spot, the tree was immediately restored to life, and in a few minutes was covered with foliage.

35.—*Il Campanile.*

The bell tower stands detached from the church; this elegant work is square, being 47 feet eight inches at the base, and 290 feet in height; it is encrusted with marbles, in the same style as the church, worked in beautiful groupings, and is an excellent specimen of the mixed style of architecture. It was erected by Gaddi, from a design by Giotto, and has been considered the very perfection of art—a gem deemed by Charles V. too precious for public exposition! too exquisite for plebeian gaze! and fit only to be preserved in a lady's boudoir.

36.—*Cathedral.*

The magnitude of the beautiful church of Santa Maria del Fiore, or the Duomo, ranks it next in size to St. Peter's at Rome, and amongst the finest of its kind in Europe; and the vast and imposing size of the dome gives grandeur to the city in every distant view. The building was commenced in 1298, and was 178 years before it was completed; the length is 426 feet, the width 363, and the height 384, being 19 feet higher than St. Paul's. Arnolf de Lapo was the original architect, and P. Brunellescho had the honour of raising the dome, a work considered so difficult that the first artists of England and Spain were invited to assist. Brunellescho's plan however was adopted; although it was considered to be impracticable, and he was himself hooted through the streets for having been so mad as to propose it, but he finally raised the noblest monument in Florence, a miracle of art, the admiration of Michael Angelo, and the model from which he erected that of St. Peter's, than which it is a trifle larger, being 149 feet from angle to angle. The exterior of the church is heavy Gothic, or ancient Roman, and it is, with the exception of the façade, entirely encrusted with carved and polished marbles, disposed in squares, alternately white, red, and green magnesian serpentine; the windows and doors are ornamented with columns, sculptures, mosaics, &c. by the most esteemed artists. The façade remains in an unfinished state, the frescos by which it was decorated at the marriage of Prince Ferdinand being now nearly effaced. The interior is divided into a nave and two aisles, by grouped Gothic pillars with capitals of rustic foilage, from which spring high pointed arches. A vast octagon under the dome, with three superb tribunes, forms the whole into a latin cross. The pavement is of coloured marbles, partly disposed by Michael Angelo. On it a line, 30 feet in length, marks the time of the meridian by the rays of the sun descending from an aperture 277 feet in height. The celebrated Lalande considers this to be the largest astronomical instrument in the world; it was formed in 1467 by Toscanelli. The interior of the dome is finely painted by Vasari and Zucchieri, from the Divina Commedia of Dante; and the other parts, together with the numerous chapels, are profusely decorated with paintings, sculptures, mosaics, &c. The choir is octagonal, the pillars and balustrades were designed by Michael Angelo, the sculpture was the work of Bandinelli and Giovanni del Opera. The principal altar, by Bandinelli, is placed under the last work of Michael Angelo, Joseph with the body of Jesus, which, at his death, he left in an unfinished state. Against one of the pillars is a painting on wood, by Orcagna, of Dante, the only record the Florentines have erected to the memory of their immortal poet; but on all sides, in this as in every other church in Florence, are monuments, inscriptions, and paintings, recording all that was glorious in talent or patriotism, or renowned in the arts or history of the middle ages. This church has been the scene of many singular events: here

assembled the celebrated council in which a Greek Emperor, surrounded by the patriarchs of his church, sat enthroned next to the Roman Pontiff and his prelates; here the Emperor Frederick III., environed by his vassal kings and dukes, sat in imperial state to dispense his honours; and here Giuliano de Medicis was basely murdered at the foot of the altar, his brother Lorenzo narrowly escaping the same fate.

37.—*D'Or San Michele.*

On the site of a very ancient church, Arnolfo di Lapo erected, in 1284, a hall for grain, of rough uncut stone, which edifice, having been damaged by an incendiary, the Republic, in accordance with the wishes of the people, who had a great veneration for a miraculous picture of the Virgin attached to one of the columns, painted by Ugolino di Sienna, and supposed to have been the means of staying the plague, caused the present beautiful building to be erected, after a design by Giotti, and under the direction of Taddei Gaddi; ten years after the miraculous Virgin was placed in a superb tabernacle, constructed by Andrea Orcagna. This building is one of the most striking specimens of early architecture, it forms a parallelogram 80 feet by 64, and is 160 in height; the proportions are extremely good, and, from its majestic bulk and towering height, it forms one of the principal ornaments of the city. On the front are the arms of the Republic, and of the Guelphs, and round the building are fourteen statues, as large as life, each furnished by a different trade. The church on the ground floor is dark, but contains many pictures and statues, and two finely carved altars; the two floors above are appropriated to the reception of public records, wills, &c., and the whole is surmounted by a heavy projecting cornice and terraced roof.

38.—*Gli Apostoli.*

Supposed to be the most ancient church in the city, its existence having been traced as far back as the tenth century; it is a building of much taste and elegance, and contains many fine works of art. Amongst the holy relics are preserved with great care three pieces of stone, supposed to have been part of the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. On Holy Thursday the sacred fire is carried on these stones in grand procession to the Duomo, and after being blessed, is distributed for the purpose of igniting the fireworks displayed on the occasion. This church is at present under repair.

39.—*La Badia.*

This abbey, inhabited by Benedictine monks, was founded in the tenth century by Comte Hughes, Marquis of Tuscany; but it has been much enlarged and improved at various subsequent periods. The church is in the form of a Greek cross, with pillars finely carved. These Benedictines have, at different times, rendered many very important services to the state, and have expended vast sums in the encouragement of agriculture, the cultivation of various parts of the Apennines, and in the instruction of youth.

40.—*Delle Stinche.*

This building, formerly belonging to the family of Cavalcanti, is at present occupied only by debtors, and females condemned to perpetual imprisonment; the apartments of the debtors are below, opening into a court 43 feet square; those of the females, which are entirely distinct, are above. There is also an infirmary and small chapel within the walls. Howard, the philanthropist, speaks in high terms of the management of this prison, and the care with which its inmates were treated.

41.—*Palazzo Vecchio.*

A lofty and very ancient building, which, although it cannot boast of much architectural beauty, is, from its imposing bulk and gloomy grandeur, one of the most striking features in a view of the city; it was built in 1298 by Arnolfo di Lapo. The plan is

irregular, and it stands a lasting monument of the violent party-spirit of the time in which it was erected, the ruling faction sacrificing the uniformity of the building rather than any part of it should stand on ground belonging to a Ghibelline. The lofty tower, which is considered a *chef d'œuvre* of architecture, is much older than the palace, it being the ancient "Tirabosche della Vacha," which was incorporated with the building; and is singular from being more bulky in the centre than at either top or bottom. It contains a transparent clock, illuminated at night. The palace is now despoiled of its glory; its apartments, which have witnessed so many extraordinary events, and been the scene of so much crime during the early days of the Republic, are now only occupied by secretaries of state, directors of customs, &c. It contains the chamber where the Council of Two Hundred used to meet, also the saloon of the Council of Five Hundred. The ceilings and walls are finely painted in fresco, by Vasari, with the celebrated actions of the Republic and the Medici family, and is adorned with some fine colossal statues, and a few paintings. The chapel, in former times, was extraordinarily rich in works of art, gold, silver, and jewels; the most valuable were removed to the chapel at San Lorenzo, and the remainder, as national property, were sold by the French. In the Piazza are frescos of various towns in Germany, and close against it the celebrated David of Michael Angelo, and a fine group by Bandinelli.

42.—*Santa Croche.*

This most interesting church, the Pantheon of Florence, is a noble building of the Corinthian order; but the exterior, as is the case with many others, is rude, dark, and unfinished. It was commenced in 1294, by Arnolfo di Lapo, and was subsequently embellished by Vasari; the interior contains monuments to many of the first poets, statesmen, &c. of Italy, amongst the number, to Michael Angelo, by Giovanni del Opera; Alfieri, by Canova, erected by order of the Countess of Albany; Galileo, Machiavelli, Arettino, Filicaja, Viviani, &c. The adjoining handsome convent was formerly the head-quarters of the horrible officials of the inquisition.

43.—*Fabricca degli Ufizzi.*

A vast building, forming three sides of a square, erected by Cosmo I., from a design by Vasari; it is ornamented with Doric columns, a statue of Cosmo, and figures of Equity and Rigour, by V. Dante. The lower part is occupied by public offices, and an open arcade of small shops; the famous gallery of Florence occupies the upper floor, and is contained in two galleries, each above five hundred feet in length, united at the end towards the river, by a third, ninety-seven feet long, and several small saloons branching from the sides, the whole presenting the finest and most interesting series of paintings, illustrative of the progress of the art from the earliest ages to the present time, that can well be imagined, and a splendid and numerous collection of ancient and modern sculpture, amongst which is the well known Medician Vase. The ceilings are finely painted in various subjects, particularly the history of the twelve ambassadors sent from different courts to congratulate Boniface VIII., who, astonished to find that they were all Florentines, exclaimed, "Florence is the first city in the world, and the Florentines the refined fifth element, the quintessence of mankind!" The more precious specimens of the arts are contained in the sixteen saloons, which are appropriated to the different schools of painting, ancient and modern bronzes, inscriptions, Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities, the Hall of the Hermaphrodite, the Hall of Niobe, containing the celebrated group of Niobe and her children, in sixteen parts, and the Tribune, in which stands "the statue that enchants the world," reinstated after her second visit to Paris, reigning triumphant and unrivalled—

> "In her small temple of rich workmanship,
> "Venus herself, who, when she left the skies,
> "Came hither."

In the same apartment are several of the rarest and most valuable specimens of sculpture and painting. Under the same roof is the celebrated library founded by Antonio Magliabechi, and much enriched by the French, at the suppression of religious houses, containing 30,000 volumes and 11,000 manuscripts.

54.—*Gabinetto Fisico, &c.*

Founded by the Medici family, collected and arranged by the celebrated Targioni, and enlarged and perfected by the Grand Duke Leopold, who added the botanic garden, observatory (which stands conspicuous), and library. The collection is particularly rich in fossils, corals, shells, and insects, which are contained in twenty well-arranged apartments; but the most extraordinary part is a series of anatomical preparations, in wax and wood, beautifully executed, amongst which are some of the works of Zumbo, a Sicilian, the inventor of the art, exhibiting the plague in all its stages, and the horrors of the charnel house. There is also a fine botanical collection, the thick and spongy leaved plants, and every description of fruit being formed in wax, to resemble nature.

FINIS.

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